



The Wujiing Well

The Wujing Well

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Long, long ago Wujing
Town near Kunming city
was a very busy place.







At the edge of the town lived a kind couple with their only son. They kept a teahouse for their living.



This couple was kind to poor people and provided free drinking water to thirsty firewood pedlars and cart drivers.





Their poor neighbours admired them for this good deed. Of course, the rich people thought they were crazy.

One day, an old man with
a long white beard came
and asked to buy a cup of
tea.



He asked the teahouse owners why they provided drinking water free when they themselves were so poor. "Who will buy your tea if passersby can quench their thirst without paying anything?"



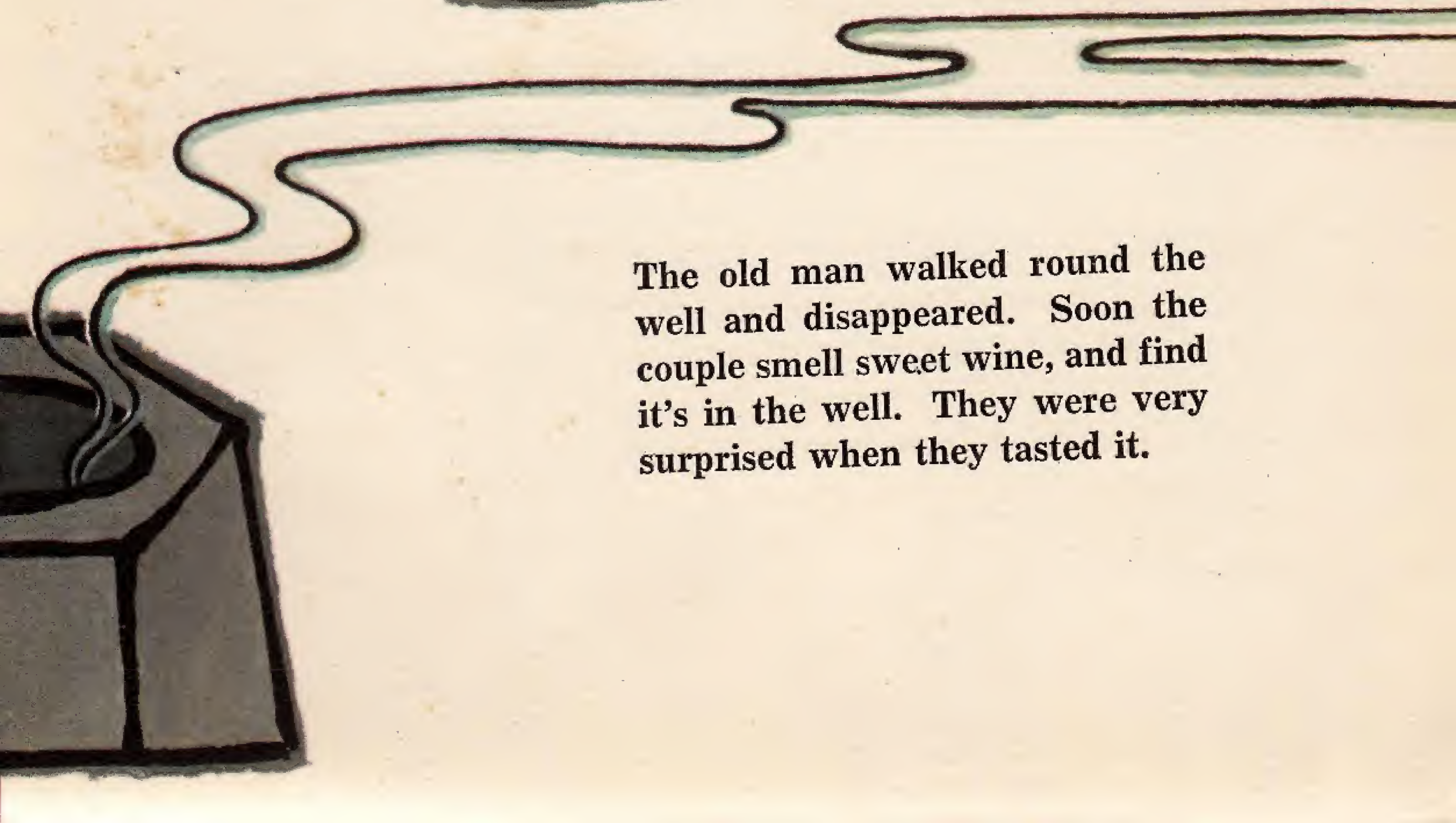


The teahouse owner explained:
"The poor should help the poor.
I'm only doing the right thing."



The old man liked the idea, and when he turned to leave, he patted their little boy on the head and said, "Be as good as your parents when you grow up, my boy."





The old man walked round the well and disappeared. Soon the couple smell sweet wine, and find it's in the well. They were very surprised when they tasted it.

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They began selling fine
wine as well as tea.





After many years, one of the couple died, and then the other. Their son has grown up and married. The son was not like his parents — he made a lot of money off the poor and spent it all eating and drinking.

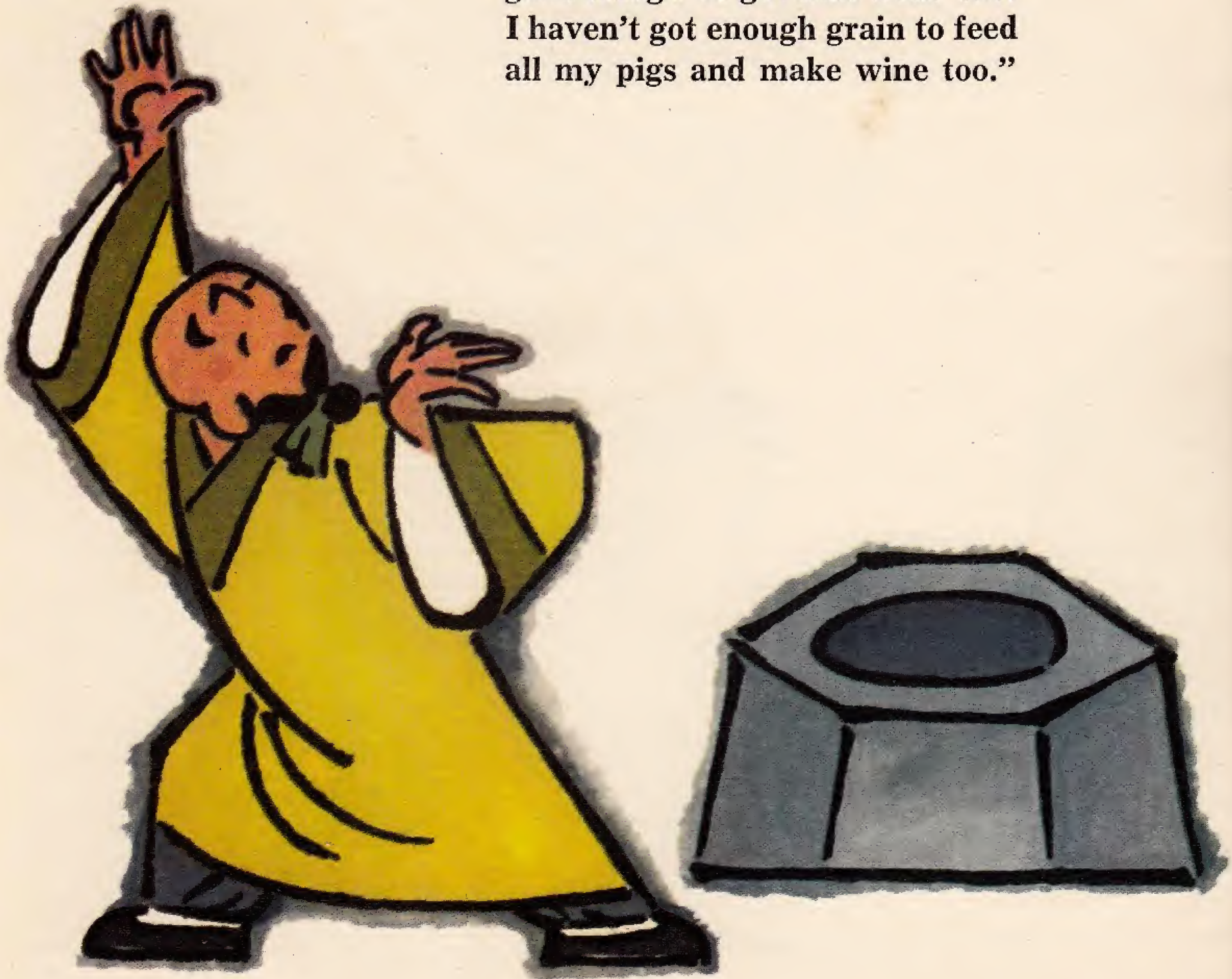


One day the old man came again.
The son knew he had magic
power and showed him the well.

When the old man asked him how
he was doing, he wiped away a tear.
“How can it be that bad when you
have a well that gives you wine to
sell?”



The son replied bitterly, "It's a good thing I've got that well. But I haven't got enough grain to feed all my pigs and make wine too."





The old man left with a deep sigh.

The next morning the wineshop's customers were at the door knocking and shouting. The wine they bought the day before has turned into water and they want their money back.





The new shop owner went to the well. There was no sweet smell of wine, but only cold gusts of wind from it. He fetched up a bucketful. It was water.



He had a tantrum — old as he was — and his wife threw herself on the ground and bawled. They were never so sad, even when the parents died.



The neighbours saw a verse on the wall:

The sky is not so noble,
As the kind heart of Man.
He sells water for wine,
And still wants free grain.





The neighbours said, "You're
too greedy and deserve
what's happened to you."



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